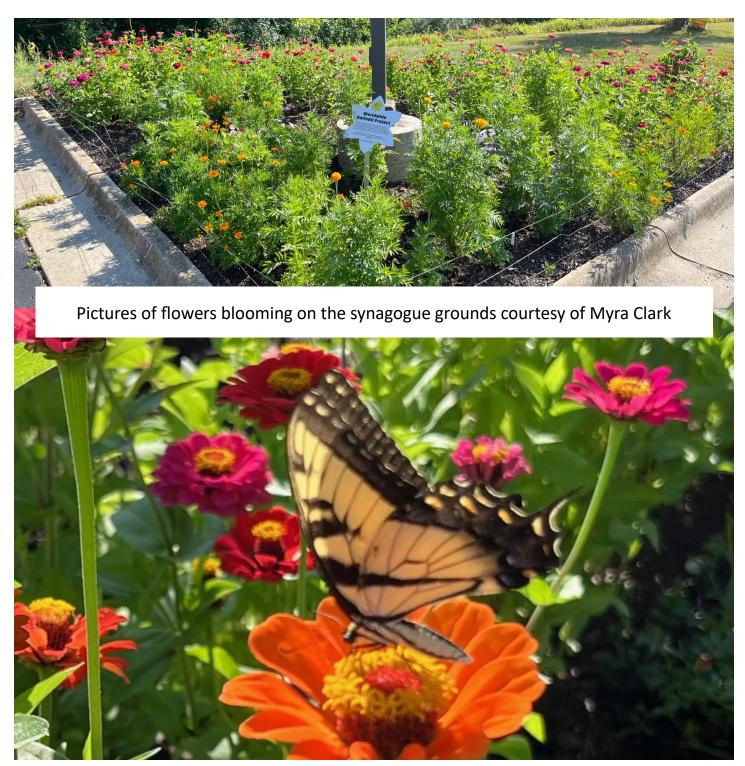


Agudas Achim Congregation

401 E. Oakdale Blvd., Coralville, IA 52241 Phone: 319-337-3813 www.AgudasAchimIC.org

August 2023 / Av-Elul 5783



FROM THE RABBI Esther Hugenholtz

As I am writing this, I am sitting on my screen porch, overlooking the lush foliage in my backyard with a cup of Earl Grey at the ready. My two black cats (yes – we adopted another one a few months ago, via a congregant no less!) are joining me on the lookout.

I've just returned from my vacation which was in some ways a domestic morality tale. During the first quarter, I rested (just plain and simple). For the second quarter, we travelled locally with the kids, including Adventureland (a true test of the spirits and the pocketbook!) and had the honor of spending Shabbat with our friends at Congregation Beth Jacob in

St. Paul, Minnesota. The third quarter, we hired an offensively luminous green dumpster and decluttered the house (another spiritual test). And in the fourth quarter, I had the great joy of participating in the annual Iowa

Some upcoming events (Read the rabbi's piece for times and locations):

Monday, August 7: Intro to Judaism begins
Sunday, August 13: Parents and caregivers' schmooze #1
Wednesday, August 16: Jewish Spiritual Journaling Class
Thursday, August 17: Rabbi Hugenholtz presents to Seniors' Group
Also Thursday, August 17: Challah Braiding Class
Thursday, August 31: Parents and caregivers' schmooze #2
Friday September 1: Apple picking, informal outdoor dinner, and outdoors Shabbat service

September, date TBD: High Holiday Machzor class

Writer's Workshop where I took a class called 'Encounters with Life: Spiritual Writing' with the superlative Mary Allen—a long-time dream for me to do so since I arrived in our UNESCO City of Literature. Roaming through downtown Iowa's charming streets and sitting in college classrooms made me feel nostalgic for a place where I live and love—I don't know if there's a word for that.

Now, I'm back at work, having ploughed through a Sisyphean-level volume of emails and reconnecting with the people I serve. It's lovely to bond again; to be engaged in the privileged work of bringing kindness and comfort and Torah to those looking

for it; to serve congregants and be woven into their lives.

Of course, inevitably, my heart turns to the High Holidays. Before September, however, there is August, and we have lots of exciting things planned in our congregation for late summer.

On Monday the 7th of August, my Introduction to Judaism class is starting again at the synagogue (7 pm, in-person). All are welcome, whether you're already Jewish or not Jewish, whether you are a member of Agudas Achim or not. I am using a new curriculum and excited for a refresher of our learning together.

On Sunday the 13th of August at 11 am, come join a Parents and Caregivers' Schmooze at Sidekick Books and Coffee. We will also have a second Parents and Caregivers' Schmooze on Thursday the 31st of August at 6 pm at Big

Grove, where we

can grab a bite to eat. We will share experiences of raising Jewish children and how to go into the High Holidays intentionally with our families. If you want two book recommendations on Jewish parenting and caregiving, I can highly recommend:

'The Blessing of a Skinned Knee – Raising Self-Reliant Children' by Wendy Mogel and 'Even God Had Bad Parenting Days – Ancient Jewish Wisdom for New Parents' by Alicia-Jo Rabins.

On **Wednesday the 16th of August**, member Corvin Greene will be teaching a **Jewish Spiritual**

(Continued on page 3)

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

Journalling class at 7 pm at the synagogue. Corvin has designed a digital journal for purchase but you can also bring your own or a blank notebook. More details to follow.

Our wildly successful **Seniors' Brunch** has invited me to teach about the High Holidays on **Thursday the 17**th **at 11 am** and I look forward to noshing, schmoozing and learning with you. We might do a little singing too!

I am taking my challah-braiding skills to the library! Please come join families at the Iowa City Public Library on **Thursday the 17**th **of August** for a **challah -braiding class**, from 1 to 2 pm. We will provide the dough and the technique; you bring the enthusiasm. It would be helpful for the library to have a headcount so please RSVP through the poster in the Bulletin.

There is more coming in September too. I will be reprising my 'High Holiday' Machzor class (date to be determined) where we can study the prayers of the High Holidays together, ask deep questions and ease ourselves into our sacred season. And keep your eyes peeled for Friday September 1st (Labor Day weekend), where we will have apple picking (4:30 pm) at Wilson's Orchard, followed by an informal outdoor dinner (for individual purchase at Wilson's; financial aid available through the synagogue, 6 pm) and an outdoors (weatherpermitting) Alternative Kabbalat Shabbat service at 7 pm. It will be lots of fun and a sweet way to bid farewell to summer and greet the first stirrings of Rosh haShanah.

I look forward to seeing you at all these activities and spending time with each other at Agudas Achim. Happy remainder of summer!

LIBRARY NOTES Teresa Weiner

August will be devoted to updating the library catalogue with new additions, both purchased and donated. Thank you for your book donations as well as financial donations to the Library Fund and to the synagogue's PJLibrary budget line. And remember to have a look at the free books in the foyer that are available to be rehomed. Here's a virtual peek:





FROM THE PRESIDENT David Lubaroff

As I write this piece for the August 2023 bulletin the temperature outside is 96 degrees and climbing. While it is not unusual for Iowa to have hot days in July and August, the weather throughout the world appears to be disastrous. During the most recent years climate-related disasters have caused the loss of life and property. They include, but not limited to, cyclones that took the lives of more than 1000 people across Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique in Southern Africa; early 2020 found Australia in the midst of its worst-ever bushfire season - following on from its hottest year on record which had left soil and fuels exceptionally dry; higher sea temperatures have doubled the likelihood of drought in the Horn of Africa region; over the last year deadly floods and landslides have forced 12 million people from their homes in India, Nepal and Bangladesh; and an El Niño period has taken Central America's Dry Corridor into its 6th year of drought. We read about many other disasters daily. All of these are most likely due to man-made climate changes.

Unless major changes are made in the use of fuels that generate electricity that is used to heat and air condition our homes and cars, global temperatures will continue to rise leading to more drought, flooding, severe storms, and major fires. The United States has been making considerable efforts to develop alternative fuels such as solar and wind generated electricity. More must be done to minimize or eliminate CO₋₂ and other atmospheric chemicals that affect the atmosphere and thus, increasing global temperatures. But many other countries are not making the same efforts and the poorest countries cannot afford to make these changes. In addition, there are a considerable number of people, many in seats of power, that do not believe in global warming, its cause, or its relationship to recent weather-related disasters. These people slow down the efforts to make required changes in energy production.

Change is crucial to survival. I have used climaterelated disasters as examples of the consequences of not making changes. So, what does this topic have to do with you and me and all of Congregation Agudas Achim? I have been a member of this synagogue since 1973 – 50 years and have been witness to and part of a myriad of changes. Many of these changes were necessary for our survival. Two of the biggest changes were moving to our new building and hiring a new rabbi. It goes without saying that both were successful and changed us in innumerable ways. Another major change occurred in the religious school when enrollment began a decline with fewer students attending Hebrew school during the week. The education committee made a major change, approved by the board, to maintain the religious school curriculum. They proposed eliminating weekday school and expanded the hours of Sunday school to include both Hebrew education and the traditional Sunday school activities. This past Spring semester was the first time post-COVID that the school was able to test the success or failure of the major change. At first glance, the school had a very active and productive semester.

Each week, month, and year have produced opportunities to improve the education of our children and to modify as necessary, our religious services. We must change to survive. Many synagogues around the country have not made significant changes and have suffered. They close their doors or merge with other at-risk synagogues. We in the executive committee and the full board will take careful looks at what we do well and what needs change. We promise transparency and will inform every one of the proposed changes. Our synagogue must react with changes to survive just as the world must change to combat changes in the environment for the world's population to survive.

Regards,

David Lubaroff

COVID COMMENTS

Bob Wallace, Barcey Levy, & Jane Zukin

The activity of COVID-19 in Johnson County has been very low. In June, 2023, University Hospitals reported that there were no hospital admissions for the disease, and the outpatient infection rates were extremely low. However, deaths in the US from the infection are continuing, and the pandemic is clearly not over. The problem is that the systems locally and in the state that monitor cases have been diminished, and good, on-time information is often lacking. So, we recommend that when you are in larger crowds and busy public places that you consider using special cautions. Both the outgoing CDC director, Dr. Rochelle Wolensky, and the incoming director, Dr. Mandy Cohen, have expressed continuing concern about the pandemic and the need for vigilance. There is concern that when schools start up again this fall, some increases in infection rates could occur. There is also good news, however. This fall you will have the opportunity to receive 3 vaccines to protect against important respiratory viruses - COVID-19, RSV, and influenza. The new COVID-19 vaccine will protect against current, active strains. In addition, a new vaccine will be available to protect adults 60 years and older against Respiratory Syncytial Virus, a disease that causes about 6,000 to 10,000 deaths each year among those over 65 years of age. And of course, the annual influenza vaccine! Please

continue to talk to your health care provider about available vaccines for these viruses.

There is some additional good news about COVID-19. Public health and medical officials are planning for new preparedness and prevention programs and systems, that in fact were not in place in 2020, when the pandemic started. There was also a recent announcement that a technique has been developed that could detect airborne COVID-19 virus particles. If this is implemented successfully, it could be a useful early virus warning system, allowing quicker preventive action.

POSTSCRIPT: Thursday, July 27th, CDC reported that there was a small uptick of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations during this July, a "summer surge," which, while modest this time, has happened in the past three summers of the pandemic. The reasons aren't clear, nor is how much of an increase will occur in the coming weeks. Please monitor the state and national media. If you will be traveling or in crowded circumstances, you should consider using the "usual" precautions. We will continue to monitor this situation, but please follow the state and national media as well.

To your health!

SENIORS GROUP

The Agudas Achim Synagogue Seniors chavurah met July 20 in the Social Hall. We enjoyed a lovely lunch featuring bagels, lox, sweet kugel, Peter Rubenstein rugalah, and all the trimmings. We played a fun game of Jewish Bingo with prizes. Many thanks to the members of this group who bring in our menu items. Cooking is not required. Join us the third Thursday of the month from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for Coffee, Conversation, and a Nosh. Reserve your spot by emailing rsvp@agudasachimic.org. We will feature a special speaker in August and will not meet in September because of the High Holidays. Remember: However you define "seniors" is up to you.

SCHOOL NEWS Sonja Spear

I'm writing this at my parents' kitchen table in hot and humid New Jersey. The cicadas are singing, and the mosquitoes are buzzing, but summer is already on the wane. Sunday School and the High Holidays are bearing down on us. This year, they arrive at the same time! Every fall holiday falls on a Sunday. A challenge? An opportunity? It depends on how you think about it.

On the challenging side: We won't be able to hold normal Sunday School until after Sukkot. But breaking free from "normal" makes it possible for us to do many great things. On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, we will meet in City Park for tashlich, the ritual in which we symbolically cast away our sins by throwing breadcrumbs into the water. We'll have a brief service, learn about Rosh Hashanah, and have some sweet holiday snacks. On September 24 we will meet at the animal shelter to learn about (and to practice) tza'ar ba'alei chaiyim (caring for living creatures). On October 1, we invite the entire family to join us for lunch in the sukkah at the synagogue. Our holiday events end with a big celebration of Simchat Torah (rejoicing in the Torah) on October 8.

We will engage in joyous, hands-on learning and teaching for the entire holiday season! We will act on Jewish ideals, and speak of what we do in Jewish terms. Visiting an animal shelter or sitting in the sukkah with friends and family, these are the things that kids will remember even when they grow up. I am looking forward to a wonderful time.

The Sunday School schedule is now on the synagogue website. You will notice that exact times may not be available until the second week of August. Sunday School starts on September 10.

As of now, we will not have a weekday Hebrew intensive program on weekdays during the month of *Tishrei* (September/early October). We sent around a survey to get a sense of interest. We received only one reply. If you *do* want a Hebrew program, but somehow missed the email, please contact Sonja at Principal@AgudasAchimlC.org. We need 5 kids to make the program viable.

That's enough about the fall holidays for now! Enjoy the last days of summer!

EARLY KEYBOARD SOCIETY CONCERT



Please join us on August 27, 2023 for a concert by **Trevor Stephenson, harpsichord** at Agudas Achim. Trevor will bring his Baroque Italian model harpsichord for a program of masterworks by Giovanni Gabrieli, Luis de Milan, Luzzasco Luzzaschi, Girolamo Frescobaldi, Domenico Scarlatti, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Save the dates for these upcoming concerts, also at Agudas Achim!

October 29, 2023: David Schrader, clavichord

March 31, 2024: Daniel Adam Maltz, fortepiano

CHALLAH BREAD BAKING

with Rabbi Esther

Thursday, August 17, 1 - 2 pm Meeting Room A

Children in grades K-6 along with their caregivers (or the whole family) are invited to learn how to make Challah with Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz! We will learn how to make the bread from a recipe, how to braid the Challah, and kids can customize with toppings. Each family in attendance







MEETING WITH RABBI HUGENHOLTZ

<u>We've set up a Calendly link here</u> for setting up meetings automatically with Rabbi Hugenholtz. We are reserving Wednesday and Thursday from 4-6 for B-Mitzvah meetings specifically, but feel free to schedule a meeting with her if you'd like. Meetings can be via Zoom, via telephone, or in person.

RAISING JEWISH KIDS IN IOWA? LET'S CHAT! PARENTS & CAREGIVERS SCHMOOZE

SESSION 1: SUNDAY AUGUST 13 AT 11 AM AT SIDEKICK BOOKS AND COFFEE

SESSION 2: THURSDAY AUGUST 31 AT 6 PM AT BIG GROVE BREWERY

Share your experiences and questions with a supportive group of parents and caregivers. All family configurations, including interfaith, single-parent, and LGBTQ+, invited.

First cup of coffee's on us! Bring your family, friends, and curiosity. Bonus: We'll announce our Family High Holiday Chavurah (fellowship). Get involved!

MAHJONG GROUP

The Agudas Achim Mahjong group is back in business! Whether you're a total newcomer or a seasoned veteran of this classic game, mahjong is the perfect way to hone your strategy skills and build community. Join us for upcoming game days from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. on Sunday August 20 and Sunday September 3. Feel free to come for all or part of the afternoon, all are welcome! Any questions? Contact Karen (kklipman@aol.com) or Ari (arielmlevin@gmail.com).

YAHRZEIT MINYAN FOR HERSH REPHUN'S FATHER

We will hold a yahrzeit minyan for Hersh Rephun's father at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, August 11. Hersh will also sponsor a kiddush lunch in memory of his father on Saturday, August 5.

ELUL YOGA

Embodying Elul: Psalm 27 as Yoga Practice

Psalm 27 is traditionally read each day during Elul, the Jewish lunar month proceeding the High Holy Days. Join Yoga teacher and cantorial soloist Lea Haravon Collins as we engage in this ancient tradition with a new twist (literally!). In this four-session immersive experience, we will meet weekly during the month of Elul to explore the Psalm's themes of strength, comfort, gratitude, petitioning and waiting through text study and Yoga postures.

We will come away from each gathering with a simple movement practice which can be coupled with a daily reading of Psalm 27 or used as you like to help you to prepare for the approaching Days of Awe.

No previous Yoga or Psalm-reading experience necessary! Join us for as many sessions as you like. Everyone, including and especially curious skeptics with tight hamstrings, is welcome.

Dates: Sundays August 20, September 3, and September 10, 2:00-3:00 p.m. (no class August 27) **Location:** Agudas Achim Congregation, 401 E Oakdale Blvd. Coralville

A Yoga mat, large towel or blanket and a journal are recommended but not necessary.

To register: rsvp@agudasachimic.org

For more information: leslea-collins@outlook.com



AUGUST SHABBAT SERVICES

Streaming link for Zoom services

Ekev	Friday, August 4	7:00 p.m.	Lev Shalem
(Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25)	Saturday, August 5	9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah
Re'eh	Friday, August 11	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
(Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17)	Saturday, August 12	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem
Shoftim	Friday, August 18	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
(Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9)	Saturday, August 19	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem
Ki Tetze	Friday, August 25	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
(Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19)	Saturday, August 26	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem

INTRO TO JUDAISM CLASS

Our Intro to Judaism class will begin Monday, August 7 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The course will run for 36 sessions at the synagogue

A full schedule can be found on the website. Contact the office for more information.

AUGUST YAHRZEITS

Rhona Fox	Selma G. Rose
Burton Frank	Sam Saltzman
Eleanor Frank	Muriel Savin
Frank Phillip Friedland	Joseph Schwartz
Anitra Haendel	Ned Siner
Ann Hecht	Francis Smith
Donald Herbach	Robert Soldofsky
Dorothy Haber Kaufman	Lillian Sterman
Pat Kean	Morris Tiss
Milton Klausner	Murray Weiner
Marilyn Krachmer	Recha Westheimer
Robert Kubby	Julie Whitebook
Julius Kunik	Craig Zwerling
Deborah Levin	
James Harry Persellin	
	Burton Frank Eleanor Frank Frank Phillip Friedland Anitra Haendel Ann Hecht Donald Herbach Dorothy Haber Kaufman Pat Kean Milton Klausner Marilyn Krachmer Robert Kubby Julius Kunik Deborah Levin

Josh Rephun

Rebecca Engman

WARM UP AMERICA

Warm Up America will meet three times before the High Holidays, on Aug 6 & 20, and on Sept. 10, 2023, 10:30 a.m. to noon, in the Social Hall. Please consider joining us as we construct afghans for assorted local charitable organizations, and add your suggestions to our list of potential recipients. We are an equal opportunity group of volunteers who gladly train anyone interested in helping WUA help others.



DONATIONS

CEMETERY FUND

Ewa Bardach & Hani Elkadi: In memory of Yelena Laneeva Bardach

FINE ARTS FUND

Jody & Norm Camac: In memory of David Nadler

GARDEN FUND

Michelle & William Mueller: In memory of Charlotte

Dobie

Stanley & Jane Zukin: In memory of Lawrence W.

Jones

GENERAL FUND

Jody & Janie Braverman: In memory of Morris

Breggin and Robert Braverman

Karen Charney & Benjamin Coelho: In appreciation

of Lea's Yoga classes

Mark Graber & Hetty Hall

Kathleen Jacobs: In memory of Richard and Ruth Jacobs, and other Jacobs family members lost in

the holocaust

GENERAL FUND, CONT.

Sam & Marj Kuperman: In memory of Lawrence W. Jones

Irwin & Patricia Levin: In memory of Rose Levin, Harry Levin, Katherine Schor, and Sol Elster

LIBRARY FUND

Paul & Esther Retish: In memory of Julie Herman

Cooper

LOUIS GINSBERG YOUTH FUND

Mark & Vickie Ginsberg: In memory of Marvin Pomerantz

SIM & SARA STRAUSS MEMORIAL FUND

Richard Strauss & Ellen Herman: In memory of Julie

Herman Cooper

Stephen Strauss: In memory of Meir Markovitz

TALMUD TORAH FUND

Eloise McCuskey: In memory of David Pitzele

YIDDISH STUDY GROUP

The Yiddish Study Group meets Mondays and Fridays at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom.

Contact the office for more information.

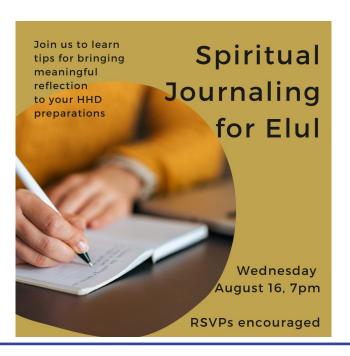
WEDNESDAY BOOK GROUP

The Wednesday book group will meet on August 23 at 1:00 p.m. on Zoom.

Contact the office for information.

SPIRITUAL JOURNALING FOR ELUL

The Hebrew month of Elul is typically one of introspection in preparation for the High Holidays of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. Join us as we learn how to get started keeping a spiritual journal, including prompts and reflection ideas for Elul. Taught by Corvin Greene. Wednesday August 16, 7:00 p.m. at the synagogue. RSVPs encouraged: RSVP here.



RECRUITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS!

Religious and adult education!
Jewish Social programming!
Tikkun O'lam!
Youth group!
Fundraising!

What, you may ask, do the above have in common, beyond their centrality to religious life at our synagogue? They are COMMITTEES—all of which currently include interesting people who are looking for additional members to join them in contributing to Agudas Achim.

Whether you are young, older, a recent or long-time member, we warmly invite you to join us in participating in the success of Agudas Achim. To request information about these committees or to express interest in joining them, simply <u>click this</u>

<u>link</u> – and include your name, email address, telephone number, and the names of committees that interest you.

Our synagogue becomes stronger, more creative, and more representative of its members when committees are fleshed out – and, of course, many hands make light work! We hope you (yes you!) will consider lending your vision, energy, and expertise to our congregation in this way.

In peace and warmly, the Board of Directors and present committee members.

PS - The chairs of each committee will have the final say on which volunteers will be added to their committee and will contact you. We look forward to collaborating with you!

AUGUST 2023

Wed	2	Summer Coffee Meet-ups	10:00 AM	Sun	20	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
Fri	4	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Warm-Up America	10:30 AM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM			Mah Jong Group in Library	11:00 AM
Sat	5	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM			Elul Yoga	2:00 PM
Sun	6	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM	Mon	Mon 21 Monday Drop-Ins 10		10:00 AM
		Warm-Up America	10:30 AM			Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Mon	7	Monday Drop-Ins	10:00 AM			Intro to Judaism	7:00 PM
		Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Summer Coffee Meet-ups	10:00 AM
		Intro to Judaism	7:00 PM			Free Lunch	11:30 AM
Wed	9	Summer Coffee Meet-ups	10:00 AM			Book Group	1:00 PM
		Ritual Committee	7:30 PM	Fri	25	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Thur	10	Exec Committee	5:30 PM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
Fri	11	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Sat	26	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM	Sun	27	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
Sat	12	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Early Keyboard Society Concert 3:00 F		3:00 PM	
Sun	13	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM	Mon	28	Monday Drop-Ins	10:00 AM
		Parents & Caregivers Schmooze	11:00 AM		Yiddish Study Group		10:30 AM
		@ Sidekick		Intro to		Intro to Judaism	7:00 PM
Mon	14	Monday Drop-Ins	10:00 AM	Wed	30	Summer Coffee Meet-ups	10:00 AM
		Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Thur	31	Parents & Caregivers Schmooze	6:00 PM
		Intro to Judaism	7:00 PM			@ Big Grove	
Wed	16	Summer Coffee Meet-ups	10:00 AM	SAVE THE DATES			
Thur	17	Seniors Group	11:00 AM	Sat	9/9	Selichot	
		Challah making at ICPL	1:00 PM	Fri	9/15	Erev Rosh Hashanah	
		Board Meeting	7:00 PM	Sat	9/16	Rosh Hashanah Day 1	
Fri	18	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Sun	9/17	Rosh Hashanah Day 2	
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM	Sun	9/24	Kol Nidre	
Sat	19	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Mon	9/25	Yom Kippur	

JULY ONEG HOSTS

Thank you to July's oneg hosts!!!

Sue Weinberg & Robert Armstrong

If you'd like to sponsor an oneg, contact the office!

YOUTH GROUP

YOUTH GROUP NEEDS YOU!

Seeking committee members interested in creating a welcoming Jewish space- those with or without children are encouraged to connect.

Email Hannah Twinvillageiowa@yahoo.com

Look for info about our first youth meeting in the September newsletter!

Donate via Venmo; Donate via Paypal

STAFF						
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Principal	Sonja Spear					
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